

Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

SI # 18-009

124

Johnson, Bob

From: Leslie <leslie.mathews325@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 16, 2018 8:05 AM
To: Johnson, Bob
Subject: Deputy encounter

Dear Sheriff Johnson,

My name is Leslie Mathews and I'm a 32 year old nurse who has been employed with Sacred Heart Hospital for going on 12 years. I'm married with two elementary school-age children. No criminal history, I've never even had a speeding ticket. I went to Target this past Tuesday to buy Valentine's Day party supplies for my kids' classes and to do some general shopping. I arrived at Target around 9:15-9:20AM and left around 11:00AM. As I was walking to my car, I was approached by a SRC deputy who was parked in front of my car. He did not introduce himself and he did not state his reason for approaching me. He approached me and asked, "Do you know why I'm here?" When I stated no sir, he then said, "Oh I think you know." Confused, I again stated no sir I don't. He then got agitated with me and said, "I'm here because you were driving crazy in the parking lot cussing at people and flipping them off." At this point, I'm just in shock because I had just spent the last couple of hours in Target and had no clue what he was talking about. When I told him that it must have been a mistake and that I had just spent two hours in Target, he said, "There is no way you have been in there that long!" Again, I tried to tell him that it was a mistake, that it wasn't me, and that I had been in the store for 2 hours. At that point he said he had pictures and/or video of this person he thought was me doing what he was accusing me of doing. I tried to tell him again it wasn't me, that I had been shopping for 2 hours in Target and that we could go into Target and have them pull their security footage to show what time I went into the store. When I said that to him, he responded, "You just need to calm down." At that point, I realized he was not going to listen to anything I had to say. He then told me he couldn't give me a ticket, but was warning me. Again, he never told me his name, but I did remember to look at his badge before he let me leave.

I left the parking lot and pulled into my bank parking lot down the road and called my husband because I was so upset with what had just happened. My husband called the sheriff's department and spoke with a Sergeant, but I don't think he got his name. He told my husband that he would handle it, but I wasn't sure what that would entail. I drove home and immediately called Target to see if I could possibly get their security footage showing what time I had entered their store and what time I left, but I was told that only the sheriff's department could request that information.

Over the last couple of days, I've had time to calm down and think a lot about the incident. I understand that a report like that has to be investigated. I don't know the details of the call or report so I'm just assuming the person responsible for this erratic behavior had to be driving a car similar to mine and it had to have happened sometime between 9:15-11:00AM. If this deputy would have approached me in a different manner to question me, that would have been okay with me and I would have answered any questions he had. But to catch me off guard and to speak and act so rude and unprofessional to me is uncalled for. I wish I could have been able to think clearly in the moment and ask him to show me the pictures and/or video he said he had, so that maybe I could have proved to him that he was accusing the wrong person.

Like I said before, this was my first encounter with a police officer and I am disappointed in how he represented your department. I have many friends and family in who work in corrections and I know how hard the job can be, but is this the type of person I'm supposed to tell my kids to run to if they're in trouble? I'm not trying to get anyone punished, but I felt like I needed to tell you my story since I was not able to do so on Tuesday. I apologize for the lengthy e-mail and appreciate your time if you were able to take the time to read it.

Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

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Leslie "Mandy" Mathews
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